

**Gender Action Plan III – 2021-2025**  
**Country Level Implementation Plan (CLIP) for the Republic of Mauritius**  
*(updated November 2023)*

**1. Context for EU action gender equality and women's empowerment in the country**

***i) Women's rights and gender equality***

Mauritius has a GII (Gender Inequality Index) value of 0.347, ranking it 78 out of 162 countries in 2019. In Mauritius, 20% of parliamentary seats are held by women, and 65.8% of adult women have reached at least a secondary level of education compared to 68.5% of their male counterparts. Female labour participation remains well below the corresponding rate for male and is low when compared with peer countries, at around 45% of the labour force. Moreover, women already in labour market are more likely than men to be unemployed during crises, as witnessed during the pandemic. Findings of Statistics Mauritius<sup>1</sup> survey in March 2021 have revealed that the number of unemployed women has increased by 24% in December 2020, while the number of unemployed men decreased by 7.5% during the same period. Latest official gender statistics have also indicated that, besides earning less on average, women are more likely than men to live in poverty, be victims of violence and are underrepresented in senior positions.

Mauritius is signatory to a number of international and human rights conventions on women's empowerment and gender equality. However, their domestication and implementation are sometimes delayed, resulting in an uneven protection of human rights. A major problem regarding women's rights in Mauritius continues to be domestic and gender-based violence (GBV). Over the past years, domestic violence has increased exponentially and feminicides have become a new phenomenon since the last quarter of 2019. The covid pandemic has further exacerbated the situation with the practice of self-isolation during lockdown. Thus, persons with disabilities (PwDs) were found to be more at risk. While women with disabilities were subjected to domestic violence, cases of sexual abuse on young girls were also on an increase. LGBTQIA+ community are also victims of verbal abuse or of physical violence.

Mauritius has a vibrant civil society organisation<sup>2</sup> that participates at different levels of decision-making. For the identification of strategic objectives of the MIP, local NGOs consulted<sup>3</sup>, reported that women have admitted to remaining in abusive situations for fear of losing financial support and as a result, only few filed complaints against their abusers. Stigmatisation also remains a major factor continuing to hinder the reporting of GBV. Responding to this alarming problem, Prime Minister's Office has commissioned a **National Strategy and Action Plan on the Elimination of GBV for 2020-2024**. The strategy considers the societal norms and beliefs held against women, identifies and redresses discriminatory practices and also focuses on M&E with strong commitment to data collection and analysis. Government has also stated its intention to present a Gender Equality Bill since 2019 but it still remains at drafting stage, even if the EU had provided technical assistance to the Government for the finalization of this Bill. The adoption of the Gender Equality Bill deserves to be monitored closely during our policy dialogue on gender.

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<sup>1</sup> Findings of the Continuous Multi-Purpose Household Survey released by Statistics Mauritius in March 2021

<sup>2</sup> EU Roadmap for Engagement with CSO in the Republic of Mauritius (2021 TO 2024 )

<sup>3</sup> Consultation for formulation of MIP was held with civil society organisations, human rights defenders, trade unions and private sector in February 2021. Due to the lockdown between March to May 2021, the consultation with government had to be postponed for June 2021.

*ii) Status of Joint programming for Multi-annual Indicative Programme (MIP)*

A Team Europe approach<sup>4</sup> was adopted during the consultation with the relevant stakeholders for the joint analysis of the main strategic objectives of the current MIP proposal. Two priority areas were retained for the MIP: **Priority Area 1 - Environment Protection and Climate Change adaptation**; and **Priority Area 2 – Governance, with one of the three focal sectors being Human Rights and Gender Equality**. Government's National Strategy and Action Plan on the Elimination of GBV that calls for donor support will be the referenced document in our future actions under Priority Area 2. EU holds a dedicated policy dialogue on gender with Ministry of Gender Equality<sup>5</sup> and with whom a Joint Monitoring Framework (JMF) with objectives and KPIs have been agreed upon to track progress in achieving SDG 5. The JMF is being updated according to the thematic areas of engagement of GAP III. A local gender expert has updated the Gender Country Profile (GCP) that reflects the incidence of the covid-19 outbreak on women, girls, PwDs and children. The GCP will reflect the dimension of gender on Priority Area 1. Young generations are too often confronted with important challenges including poverty, socio-economic and political exclusion at all levels. These challenges are often compounded for young women and girls, as well as for youth with disabilities and all discriminated groups, such as LGBTI youth. In a spirit to continue our engagement with young people, EU is setting up an EU-Mauritius Youth Forum to engage into dialogue with youth especially on the priority areas of our MIP.

## **2. Selected thematic areas of engagement and objectives**

As indicated, it is our intention now to sign a new Joint Monitoring Framework Agreement with the Ministry of Gender Equality based on the new areas of engagement of GAP III. Thematic areas of engagement have been identified in consultation with the Gender Cells of line ministries. Baselines and targets in accordance with specific objectives and corresponding indicators of GAP III have been selected and will be validated at the next gender policy dialogue. The selected “*areas of engagement*”<sup>6</sup> of the new JMF and their respective specific objectives and corresponding indicators that will guide our future intervention in promoting gender equality; women and girls' empowerment; women, girls' and children's rights and human rights are summarised as follows<sup>7</sup>:

- i) Ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence (*MIP Priority Area 2*);
- ii) Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights (*MIP Priority Area 2*);
- iii) Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women (*MIP Priority Areas 1 & 2*);
- iv) Promoting equal participation and leadership (*MIP Priority Area 2*); and
- v) Addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by the green transition and the digital transformation (*MIP Priority Areas 1 & 2*)

## **3. Targeted actions supporting gender equality and women's empowerment**

Mauritius qualifies as an upper-middle country and as such bilateral envelope is limited (*indicatively to be around EUR 9 million*). The modalities of implementation is yet to be defined but Government has favoured technical assistance to support them in their post-covid recovery. EU has long standing relationship with CSO in Mauritius, having supported them for

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<sup>4</sup> The only EU Member State present in Mauritius is France. The EU Delegation will continue full cooperation and convergence of priorities with France and its development agency, i.e. the Agence Française de Développement (AFD), as well as the Région La Réunion

<sup>5</sup> Minister of Gender Equality & Family Welfare chairs a Steering Committee on Gender which comprises of Gender Focal Points of all line ministries. EU uses the same national gender machinery for its policy dialogue on gender

<sup>6</sup> The areas of engagement follows from the new Gender Action Plan III (2021 – 2025)

<sup>7</sup> The thematic priority areas of engagement, specific objectives and corresponding indicators were identified jointly by Ministry of Gender Equality and line ministries and would constitute the new Joint Monitoring Framework

more than a decade under various instruments. Our support has contributed to improving their service delivery and advocacy role through our successive Capacity Building Programmes. Continued support to CSO in areas of human rights i.e women's rights, children's rights, rights of PwDs and rights of LGBTi persons is pertinent. The Cooperation Facility will be used to support capacity development and institutional building, including through technical assistance and exchange of public expertise (eg *TAIEX & SOCIEUX*). It is our intention also to maintain our "Rise & Shine" gender campaign to raise awareness on the issues of Gender and Human Rights, including violence against women given the success under Phase 1 (in 2019) and Phase 2 (in 2021).

Indicatively, the preliminary activities that are planned under each thematic area of engagement are highlighted below:

**A. Thematic area of engagement: Ensuring freedom from all forms of gender-based violence (MIP Priority Area 1)**

- Provide technical assistance to strengthen the Protection of Domestic Violence Act (*ongoing in 2021 under TAEIX Facility*);  
*Achievement: Completed in November 2022. Government is now reviewing the PDVA in light of recommendations of the TAIEX experts of PDVA Amendment Bill 2022. EUD will follow up progress with government during the Annual Gender Policy Dialogue (G2 marker)*
- Support Ministry of Gender Equality on the adoption of the Gender Equality Bill (drafted with EU support) and subsequently assist them in the implementation of the legislation (*under bilateral envelope*);  
*Achievement: TA will be provided under Service Contract of the Cooperation Facility from 2024-2027 through the provision of a long-term Gender expert to finalise the Gender Equality Bill. The Service contract is expected to be signed by latest end of December 2023 (G2 marker).*
- Support Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Gender Equality with the implementation of the recommendations of the National Strategy and Action Plan on the Elimination of GBV (*preferably TA under bilateral envelope*);  
*Achievement: Long term gender expert will be provided as part of the Cooperation Facility for the period 2024-2027 to assist Ministry of Gender Equality in the implementation of the National Strategy and Action Plan on GBV and implementation of National Gender Policy 2030 (G2 marker)*
- Support NGOs on advocacy and service delivery under CSO thematic programme (*ongoing and new CSO allocation under NDICI*);  
*Achievement: Two projects with strong gender and women empowerment components have been retained under CSO allocation and EIDHR respectively following an open call for proposals. Grant contracts are expected to be signed by end of December 2023 with implementation starting in January 2024 (G2 marker)*
- Advocacy on GBV through our Rise and Shine gender campaign (*3<sup>rd</sup> phase to be initiated under the Cooperation Facility of NDICI*);  
*Achievement: 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the Rise and Shine Gender campaign will be initiated under the Communication & Visibility service contract of the Cooperation Facility for the period 2024-2027 (G2 marker)*
- Maintain the annual policy dialogue on gender to track progress on the Joint Monitoring Framework of the EU-Mauritius Gender Action Plan (*with financial support of Cooperation Facility*);  
*Achievement: The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Gender Policy Dialogue is scheduled in December 2023. Organisation of the annual gender policy dialogue will be catered under the C&V Service Contract of the Cooperation Facility 2024-2027 (G2 marker)*

- Organise forum debates on burning issues (e.g domestic & gender-based violence and feminicides) with CSO and produce recommendation / reflection papers to address these challenges (*under Cooperation Facility*).

***Achievement:** The C&V Service Contract under the Cooperation Facility 2024-2027 will support the organisation of forum debates on these key burning issues given that the updated Gender Country Profile 2022 has alerted that GBV is on the rise in Mauritius to reach an alarming situation. Cases of femicides have been reported over the past years (G2 marker)*

## **B. Thematic area of engagement - Promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights (MIP Priority Area 2)**

- Ongoing support to Mauritius Family Planning & Welfare Association (MFPWA) at promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights of girls under CSO thematic programme (*ongoing under CSO allocation*);

***Achievement:** Activities under this contract will end in December 2022 with the end of the implementation period. The project has organised a series of activities related to sexual and reproductive health and rights of women and girls as well as activities to address GBV. To mark the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women (IDEVAW 2023), MFPWA is organising a workshop on GBV on the theme “NO EXCUSE: WOMEN’S SAFETY IN NOT OPTIONAL”. (G2 marker)*

- Call for proposals will have among its various eligible actions those that aim at promoting sexual and reproductive health and rights (*under new CSO allocation of NDICI*);

***Achievement:** A new grant contract is expected to be awarded to MFPWA under EIDHR allocation by end of December 2023 (G2 marker)*

- Maintain the annual policy dialogue on gender to track progress on the Joint Monitoring Framework of the EU-Mauritius Gender Action Plan (*with financial support of Cooperation Facility*).

***Achievement:** As already indicated, the annual gender policy dialogue will be maintained under the C&V Service contract of the Cooperation Facility 2024-2027 (G2 marker)*

## **C. Thematic area of engagement - Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women (MIP Priority Areas 1 & 2)**

- Call for proposals with two lots – one for each priority area of the MIP - will have among its various eligible actions under both lots those that aim at promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women (*under new CSO allocation of NDICI*);

***Achievement:** Grant contracts to support NGOs on gender equality and women and girls’ empowerment and youth empowerment will be signed by latest end of December 2023 (G2 marker)*

- Technical assistance to Ministry of Social Security for revamping the disability sector and finalising the Disability Bill that will provide for employability of persons with disabilities (*current SOCIEUX Facility and subsequently under bilateral envelope*);

***Achievement:** Technical Assistance is foreseen under the Cooperation Facility 2024-2027 service contract to support ministry with the finalisation of the long-awaited Disability Bill. The Bill is expected to cater for challenges faced by women, girls’ etc (G1 marker)*

- Support Ministry of Gender Equality on the adoption of the Gender Equality Bill and once adopted to provide TA for its promulgation and implementation (*under bilateral envelope*);

***Achievement:** As already indicated, EUD will provide TA to Ministry of Gender Equality to finalise the GE Bill which is expected to cover the economic and social rights and empowering of women and girls as well. (G2 marker)*

- Provide training to Ministry of Gender Equality and line ministries on gender mainstreaming (*either bilateral envelope or Cooperation Facility or other Facilities such as TAEIX*);

***Achievement:** The service contract under the Cooperation Facility 2024-2027 which will be awarded by end of December 2023 has made provision for a long term gender expert to reinforce the capacity Ministry of Gender Equality in mainstreaming gender in line ministries in line with the National Gender Policy 2030 (G2 marker)*

- Follow-up with Ministry of Gender Equality on the promulgation of the Children's Act (*prepared with EU support*) to achieve gender parity in school enrolment and primary and secondary completion rates and provide any TA facilities needed e.g setting up of Children's Court (*ongoing TAIEX Facility and subsequently bilateral envelope*);

***Achievement:** This activity is completed. However, Ministry of Gender Equality has now requested for some additional support in the implementation of the Children's Act. Short term NKE can be mobilised under the service contract to be awarded by end of December 2023 under the Cooperation Facility for the period 2024 – 2027. TAIEX experts were mobilised mid-2023 to support Ministry of Gender Equality in reviewing of the child day care system. (G1 marker)*

- Maintain the annual policy dialogue on gender to track progress on JMF of the EU-Mauritius Gender Action Plan (*with financial support of Cooperation Facility*);

***Achievement:** As reported above*

- Maintain our “Rise and Shine” gender campaign to raise awareness on the central role of women and girls' economic empowerment to realise women's rights and gender equality, and protection of human rights in general (*Cooperation Facility can be used for subsequent 3<sup>rd</sup> phase*);

***Achievement:** As reported above. To note that the Investment Climate Reform (ICR) Facility will support National Women Entrepreneur Council to develop a roadmap to promote women entrepreneurship in Mauritius. Assignment is expected to start beginning of December 2023 (G2 marker)*

- Support the setting up of the EU – Mauritius Youth Forum for regular dialogue with youth in promoting gender equality and women & girls empowerment (*Cooperation Facility can be used*).

***Achievement:** 1<sup>st</sup> cohort of the local youth sounding board was launched in February 2022. 25 Youth Ambassadors were selected after an open expression of interest with a two-year mandate. They have been very active on several key issues including gender, women and girl's empowerment and youth. EUD will launch expression of interest in January 2024 for the 2<sup>nd</sup> cohort. (G1 marker)*

#### **D. Thematic area of engagement - Promoting equal participation and leadership (MIP Priority Area 2)**

- Maintain the annual policy dialogue on gender to track progress on the JMF of the EU-Mauritius Gender Action Plan with respect to this particular objective (*with financial support of Cooperation Facility*);

***Achievement:** As reported above*

- Provide capacity building to the Parliamentary Gender Caucus (PGC) (*either bilateral envelope or Cooperation Facility or twinning programme*);

***Achievement:** EUD organised a presentation of the main findings of the 2022 updated Gender Country Profile for the Republic of Mauritius to the PGC in December 2022. As a follow-up, in 2023 EUD consulted the Office of the Speaker for the possibility of mobilising TAIEX experts for empowering the PGC. Unfortunately there were no response as the PGC seems to be inactive.*

- Supporting Gender Links Mauritius with its action “Advancing Gender Equality and Youth Inclusion in the Republic of Mauritius” to promote equal participation and improve leadership skills of women in politics at both local authorities level and at legislative assembly (*ongoing under CSO allocation*);

***Achievement:** Activities are ongoing. EUD participated to several activities including in 2023 a debate organised on gender parity in Parliament which saw the participation of representatives from*



*both government and opposition parties. Our Youth Ambassadors also participated and formulated a reflection paper on gender parity in Parliament from youth perspective (G2 marker)*

- Support Ministry of Gender Equality on the adoption of the Gender Equality Bill and once adopted to support implementation (*bilateral envelope*);

*Achievement: As reported above, EUD will provide TA under Cooperation Facility to finalise the GE Bill which is expected to promote parity in Parliament (G2 marker)*

- Provide capacity building to line ministries for gender mainstreaming (*either bilateral envelope or Cooperation Facility or TAIEX instrument*);

*Achievement: A long-term gender expert will be recruited by end of December 2023 as part of the Service Contract of the Cooperation Facility 2024-2027 to reinforce capacity of Ministry of Gender Equality in mainstreaming gender in line ministries as part of the National Gender Policy 2030 (G2 marker)*

- In the next phase of the “Rise and Shine” gender campaign, the Goodwill Ambassadors will be encouraged to raise awareness on leadership role of women at senior position and in politics (*Cooperation Facility*).

*Achievement: 3<sup>rd</sup> phase of the Rise and Shine gender campaign will be reactivated under the C&V Service contract of the Cooperation Facility 2024-2027. For information, the service contract will be signed by end of November 2023 with effective starting date 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023 for a 36-months duration (G2 marker)*

#### **E. Thematic area of engagement - Addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by the green transition and the digital transformation (MIP Priority Areas 1 & 2)**

- Call for proposals with two lots – one for each priority area of the MIP - will have among its various eligible actions that would address the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by the green transition and the digital transformation (*under new CSO allocation of NDICI*);

*Achievement: Call for proposals were successfully launched in early 2023 and evaluation completed. Grant contracts will be signed by latest end of December 2023. Actions will relate to gender, human rights, women & girls empowerment, youth empowerment, climate change and environment. At least one grant contract will target gender and women empowerment (G2 marker for this specific action but overall G1 marker for the call for proposals)*

- Technical assistance to Ministry of Environment as part of our dedicated policy dialogue on climate change to mainstream gender in greening of the economy and digitalisation process (*either bilateral envelope or Cooperation Facility*);

*Achievement: As part of the Service contract for the Cooperation Facility 2024-2027, a team of six long term experts will be recruited including three of them dealing with environment and climate change and circular economy. They will ensure that gender is mainstreamed in the greening of the economy (G1 marker)*

#### **4. Engage in dialogue for gender equality and women empowerment**

EU will continue to hold annual technical and high-level policy dialogues on gender with Ministry of Gender Equality. France will participate to the gender policy dialogue and contributes to the discussions. For 2021, priority will be the signing of a new Joint Monitoring Framework based on the new areas of engagement of GAP III that will guide our future intervention in contributing to the target of at least 85% of our actions addressing gender. MoGE has advanced on the identification of the baseline data and targets of the corresponding indicators (*see attached draft JMF for GAP III which is expected to be signed in September 2021*).

**Achievement:** The new Joint Monitoring Framework 2021-2025 based on GAP III was signed with the Ministry of Gender Equality at the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Gender Policy Dialogue on 8<sup>th</sup> November 2022. It will serve as reference document to track progress on the implementation of SDG5 on gender equality and in the identification of gender sensitive actions (G2 marker)

The updated CSO Roadmap 2021-2025 has been elaborated after consultation with CSO to guide our support to CSO in promoting gender equality and women empowerment. As in the past, EU plans to organise forum debates with CSOs (including women organisations, human rights defenders, and organisations fighting for the rights of LGBTi and PwDs etc) to produce reflection papers on burning issues such as domestic violence, GBV or feminicides, rights of PwDs and LGBTi. The forthcoming EU-Mauritius Youth Forum will be yet another platform to engage dialogue with the young generation on the question of gender equality, women empowerment, and human rights issues. The outcome of these dialogues will guide our discussions during our gender policy dialogues with government and subsequently at the Article 8 Political Dialogues. The updated Gender Country Profile will also serve as reference document during our policy dialogue on gender.

## 5. Outreach and other communication / public diplomacy activities

Our Delegation has formulated a public diplomacy framework that revolves around 10 key priority areas as we believe that Public diplomacy initiatives allowing to engage with our target audiences and partners can be key to build trust, enhance the understanding of the EU, support the implementation of our policy priorities. Not surprisingly, Human Rights, Gender Equality, Youth Engagement & Empowerment features prominently as one of them.

Below is an extract of our public diplomacy framework that focuses on HR and Gender Equality priority.

Political priorities	Policy and communication objectives	Key messages for 2021 to 2025	Planned Activities for 2021 - 2025
Human rights, and Gender Equality, Youth engagement & empowerment	<p><u>Human rights:</u></p> <p>To protect and promote the universality and indivisibility of human rights within the EU and in our partner countries</p> <p>To contribute to the respect by the partner country of international commitments taken in the field of human rights</p> <p>To support human rights defenders with funding, capacity building and advocacy in order to promote respect for human rights</p>	<p>The EU is committed to respect fundamental rights within the European Union and to advance and consolidate human rights in its external action.</p> <p>Human rights are part of the annual gender policy dialogue and Article 8 Political Dialogue with the Government. In this framework, the EU calls on all its partners to combat all forms of discrimination on any ground, including on grounds of sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, property, birth, disability, age, sexual orientation and gender identity.</p> <p>The EU has been providing support to institutional partners and human rights defenders to promote the rights of women and children, persons with disability, elderly, etc.</p>	<p>Article 8 Political dialogue (<i>annual</i>)</p> <p>Dialogue with Human Rights Defenders and engagement with the civil society (<i>annual</i>)</p> <p>Project-related events</p> <p>Sensitization campaigns</p> <p>Conferences</p> <p>Public debates</p> <p>Joint EU-Human rights defenders messages</p> <p>European Film Festival: films on some human rights issues such as the rights of LGBTIQ+ persons</p>

	<p><u>Gender equality :</u> To reduce gender inequality in the Republic of Mauritius</p> <p>To raise awareness on EU policies, positions and actions on human rights and monitor convergence with EU positions and initiatives in relevant international HR fora</p>	<p>Team Europe is ready to provide technical assistance and twinning to promote gender equality and a higher participation of women in the economy and in the decision-making fronts.</p>	<p>Policy dialogue on gender (<i>annual</i>)</p> <p>Signing of EU-Mauritius GAP III (2021 – 2025) – New Joint Monitoring Framework</p> <p>Project-related events Sensitization campaigns</p> <p>Conferences</p> <p>Public debates</p>
	<p><u>Youth:</u> To promote youth engagement &amp; empowerment</p>	<p>In line with EU's Youth Strategy to engage youth and their organisations to take part in the dialogue with CSOs.</p> <p>Setting up of Youth Forum to build trust between EU and youth, and create opportunities for us together with our partners (government, non-state actors and private sector) to recognise and leverage the potential of youth</p>	<p>Setting up EU-Mauritius Youth Forum in 2021</p> <p>Dialogue during Youth Forum (<i>annual</i>)</p>

## 6. Technical Facility and/or financial resources allocated to support GAP III implementation

Indicatively Mauritius can expect to receive around EUR 9 million as bilateral envelope to support activities that would address the two priority areas of the MIP. Part of the fund is likely to be used in the form of TA while an amount of EUR 1 million is earmarked as a Cooperation Facility to support, among others, implementation of activities related to GAP III. Some EUR 0.5 million would be used as support measures to CSO in addressing the priority areas of the MIP.

### The following actions pertaining to implementation of GAP III are foreseen:

- i) Service contract Cooperation Facility 2024-2027 – a long term gender expert will be put at the service of the Ministry of Gender Equality for mainstreaming gender in line ministries etc; (*Overall action is G1 marker with a total budget of EUR 1.2mio, but the specific activity related to the long term gender expert is a G2 marker*)
- ii) A grant to an NGO under CSO allocation for empowering women, girls and young people through reinforced transition from prison to community programme for an estimated amount of EUR 600 000 is expected to be finalised by end of December 2023 (*G2 marker*);
- iii) A grant to an NGO under EIDHR for promoting rights of the child and good governance for an estimated amount of EUR 160 000 is expected to be finalised by end of December 2023 (*G2 marker*); and
- iv) Service contract C&V of the Cooperation Facility 2024 – 2027 has made provision for organising annual gender policy dialogue and visibility events related to International Women's Day, IDEVAW, 16-days Activism and Human Rights Day (*G1 marker*)

Date: 14/11/2023

Signature by Head of Cooperation: Mr Milko van Gool [e-signed]